Holocaust Memory and Multicultural Lviv: 
Jewish Perceptions of Ethnic Relations, 1918-1941

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**Introduction**
“Every survivor has a story to tell…from every story you learn a little bit.”

- Isaac Goodfriend

Taken from an interview done by the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (now USC Shoah Foundation Institute), this quote encapsulates the ideas of the organization and its goals in collecting oral testimonies from Holocaust survivors and witnesses. With each person that comes forwards and provides their accounts and experiences, we have a better, and more personal, understanding of the tragic events which took place during World War II. Whether researching specific parts of the archive, or exploring the content as a curious individual, it allows one to both see and hear moving stories from over 50,000 survivors, witnesses and rescuers. There is a noticeable difference between reading firsthand accounts such as wartime diaries and seeing them play out in front of you as they are recalled years later. Unspoken cues such as changes in tone of voice, shifts in emotion and pauses between sentences, which would be otherwise undocumented, are preserved. As the years go on and fewer survivors remain, these help to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and well in the American conscience.

Steven Spielberg started the organization after filming the movie *Schindler’s List*. A common question asked by Jewish survivors brought to the set was “what about my story?”; survivors felt like their experiences were placed in the background, and they had no outlet to express themselves. Taking this question to heart, he established the foundation as a means of collecting and documenting these firsthand accounts, almost fifty years after the conclusion of World War II. When looking at the breakdown of the testimonies, 48,968 of 51,294 videos were

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1 Excerpt from *In Perpetuity: The Story of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Youtube: 0:00-0:15
2 Excerpt from *The USC Shoah Foundation Story*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Youtube: 0:05-0:40
the stories of Jewish survivors. For this particular archive and form of documentation, mainly Jewish memories and experiences in Europe during the Holocaust are being preserved and disseminated for research and educational purposes.

For the interviewed survivors, different types of experiences could be felt in the same region based on factors such as religion, culture and socioeconomic status. In Poland, the relations between Poles and Jews remains contentious to this day. These relations between Jews and gentiles become even more complicated in the east, with the large population of Ukrainians being present as well. The Galicia region, now located in modern day western Ukraine, was for centuries an important area for all three groups. The city of Lviv, incorporated into the Second Polish Republic in the years leading up to the war, had a diverse mixture of Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian citizens. Because of this, it is referred to by various different names depending on the perspective of the individual. In Polish it is known as Lwów, which is also the way it is indexed in the Visual History Archive. However, many survivors who are interviewed also refer to the city using the Yiddish word Lemberg. In Ukrainian, it is called Lviv or L’viv. I will refer to the city as Lviv throughout my paper for consistency, as that is what the city is currently known as.

With each of these ethnic groups establishing roots in the city as far back at the 14th century, hundreds of years of conflicts led to oftentimes tense relations and misconceptions. Poles and Ukrainians fought over control of the land, seeing it as integral to their particular culture, while Jews were perceived as outsiders who did not fully assimilate themselves with anyone. With the outbreak of World War II, each of these groups went through their own particular hardships at the hands of the Soviet and German occupiers.

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3 Visual History Archive, Search Engine: Biographical Search by Experience Group. This search engine put testimonies into nine different experience groups
This paper focuses primarily on Jewish perspectives of ethnic relations between themselves, Poles and Ukrainians in Lviv from 1918 to 1941. It will also explore Jewish perceptions of Soviet and German occupation and how they were treated by both. Visual History Archive interviews from Jewish survivors who had experiences in the city will be used to show general themes of interactions with Polish and Ukrainian neighbors. With its high population of all three cultures and amount of testimonies available, Lviv makes for a good study of experiences in one particular Eastern European location. Interviews will also be used to explore how these relationships with gentile neighbors changed while under Soviet and German rule, and how the Jewish population interacted with and were treated by their occupiers. This analysis will stop at 1941 so that the focus will be on the transition from Soviet to German rule and how this affected Jews, and because the establishment of the Lviv ghetto in the fall greatly diminished interactions with gentile neighbors.

The first chapter will discuss the origins of the Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive (VHA) and the context in which it arose. This particular organization is probably the largest and most influential oral history database pertaining to the Holocaust, with over 50,000 testimonies in 32 languages from 56 countries. In order to understand the success of the archive and the general increase in Holocaust interest and research in the 1990s, one has to look at the changing views and attitudes towards survivors in the years leading up to the project. The first part of the chapter will focus on the shift from postwar ideas of Jewish experience, where they were largely ignored in the media and grouped with other victims, to the gradual transition of portraying them prominently in books and television as a separate survivor group with their own identity. The second part of the chapter will focus on the archive’s origins, goals and interview

4 Excerpt from Preserving History. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Youtube: 2:05-2:15
methodology. Having a comprehensive background on the archive, and seeing the types of primary sources it produced, is helpful in analyzing and understanding the interviews. The indexing of the testimonies, as well as the general interview structure and common questions, are discussed to help indicate how survivors convey their experiences in Lviv.

The second chapter will give a brief history of Lviv and the region in which it is located, focusing primarily on the interwar period from 1918-1939. The Jewish population was the third highest in Poland, and comprised around one-third of the city’s total. Despite this, there were tensions present between themselves, Poles and Ukrainians. The majority of the chapter will analyze interviews from Jewish survivors who grew up in Lviv between the two world wars and the types of interactions they had with Poles and Ukrainians.

The third chapter will be broken down into two parts: 1939 and 1941. In August 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and the next month the city was occupied by Soviet forces. During this time, thousands of Jews fled German-controlled western Poland and moved east into Lviv. In 1941, Germany moved east and began reclaiming territories once promised to the Soviets; by the end of June, they had entered Lviv. Survivors who went through this tumultuous transition indicate changing relationships with their gentile neighbors and harsh experiences under Soviet and Nazi occupation.

The archive cannot logistically give a universal or all-encompassing look into Jewish experiences in Lviv. Every survivor memory that is preserved was influenced by their own particular experiences, upbringing, economic status and more. However, it does help to build a picture of Jewish relations with Poles, Ukrainians, Soviets and Germans in a particularly tumultuous period of time.
Chapter 1 – The Visual History Archive

The use of oral history to relay information from one generation to the next is not a recent phenomenon; rather, it is a practice that has been in place for hundreds of years. Culturally, oral narratives have been used to pass on stories and anecdotes that were perceived to be of importance; through years of constant restating, there was ample opportunity for the material to be changed or misconstrued. But the 20th century saw the establishment of new technologies and the ability to formally record the information that people wanted to share. A particularly sought after group appears to be those who were witnesses to and survivors of the Holocaust. Several universities and institutions created Holocaust video collections, with interviews being recorded and stored for purposes of research. One of the most prominent and well-known collections is run by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Much of the initial success can be credited to its origins, when it was started by a high profile director after a critically acclaimed film. Since then, the ongoing collection efforts and eventual transition to a research university has allowed it to attain prominence as possibly the largest testimony database of Holocaust survivors, witnesses and aid providers.

In December of 1993 the movie Schindler’s List was released in US theaters to widespread accolades. Despite being known as a director more focused on genres with lighter subject matter, critics praised Spielberg’s depiction of businessman Oskar Schindler, who helped to save around 1,200 Polish Jews by employing them in his ammunition factory during World War II. During the production of the film, there was a hope to remain as historically accurate as possible, in order to truthfully represent Schindler and his actions. To help facilitate this cause,

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5 See Yale University’s Holocaust Survivor’s Film Project, which began filming in 1979 and interviewed over 4,000 survivors, as well as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which has an international database of oral history collections
Spielberg filmed in Europe and at the original site locations whenever it was possible. Spielberg also wanted to make sure that he was not violating the memories of the Jewish survivors being portrayed in the film. ‘Schindler Jews’ were identified, located and brought on set to share their memories and experiences. Speaking to these witnesses allowed for Spielberg to recreate and depict Oskar Schindler’s life during the Holocaust and the steps he went through to protect his Jewish factory workers. But perhaps more importantly, listening to what these individuals went through during the war and the subsequent lives they were able to lead resonated with the director. While the survivors appreciated the fact that this man’s heroism was being shared with a larger audience, a question many of them posed for Spielberg was: what about my story?

While the film relied heavily on the personal narratives of Jews, they went towards building the profile of one German aid-provider rather than the many hundreds of Jewish individuals. Inspired by these survivors who were eager to tell their stories, Spielberg poetically thought of continuing Schindler’s List from the original 1,200 individuals to 50,000 survivor testimonies.

The film and archive came during a time when Holocaust dialogue and depiction was on the rise. With an initial release date in December of 1993, it debuted eight months after the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Just two years shy of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, it also came at a time of transition in historical consciousness. The generation which experienced the Holocaust firsthand as a personal memory began to dwindle, while there was an increase in collective memory being experienced.

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7 Personal Interview with Professor Douglas Greenberg 1/18/13. Professor Greenberg is the former Executive Director of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, arriving to the organization in 1999.
8 USC Shoah Foundation Institute. In Perpetuity: The Story of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Youtube 0:45
9 USC Shoah Foundation Institute. The Shoah Foundation Story with Steven Spielberg. Youtube 1:20-2:00
Films such as *Schindler’s List* made tangible these important historical events which the current generation had not been through. As essayist Frank Rich points out, a movie such as this “will eternally preserve the Holocaust in the world’s memory…instead of relating to the past through a shared sense of place or ancestry, film and television consumers can experience a common heritage with people they have never seen; they can acquire memories of a past to which they have no geographic or biological connection.”

While this idea of a collective memory among people who did not witness the atrocities firsthand can be argued as both a beneficial or detrimental discourse, it is still important to acknowledge that the dialogue existed in the first place. The 1990’s seemingly saw a rise in the portrayal of the Holocaust in everyday media as well as an increase in the amount of survivors wanting to share their experiences. But rather than a sudden turn towards awareness and remembrance, there was a gradual shift from the decades following the Second World War to the end of the 20th century. The Holocaust as we know it now went from as an unnamed atrocity seldom discussed through public or private platforms to one which is in the everyday conscience of Americans. In the perspective of many college-aged students who grew up and went to school during the time of *Schindler’s List*, their ideas about the Holocaust and survivor testimonies are shaped around more modern ideologies. The Holocaust as an idea is something we are well aware of, and sometimes assume it has always been a well-established concept.

As historian Peter Novick discusses, what we know as the Holocaust today is a retrospective construction, a contemporary idea that was not established at the time that the

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11 Frank Rich as quoted in Loshitzky, 4
events were taking place during World War II.\textsuperscript{12} The way we view it now is seen as a “normal human response”, keeping the memory alive through education and awareness. But while the massive exterminations were being carried out, the perspective was much different. From 1933 to 1942, Nazi anti-Semitism was known and reported in newspapers, but it was part of a larger picture of death and destruction. Jews were seen as one of many different types of victims, a percentage of the fifty to sixty million who died over the course of the war, not as a separate entity who were personally persecuted.\textsuperscript{13} Presses also tended to focus more on battles and bombings which they had firsthand accounts of, rather than the second and third-hand reports of concentration camps slowly being filtered to the United States.\textsuperscript{14} When camps were liberated by US forces in 1945, Jewish survivors only accounted for about one-fifth of those liberated by American troops, and were still being incorporated into the larger framework of Nazi victimhood.\textsuperscript{15}

The postwar years, from 1945-1960, continued to portray the Jewish population as being a part of a larger entity of victims of the Nazi atrocities, and were referred to with the non-specific term “displaced persons.”\textsuperscript{16} The status of victim was a shunned label; Jews did not want to see themselves, or have others seem them, as weak.\textsuperscript{17} At the same time, Holocaust survivors arriving in the United States were young, beginning to learn English and rebuilding their lives, mostly in urban Jewish neighborhoods. While they seemed to make the deliberate choice not to

\textsuperscript{12} Peter Novick, \textit{The Holocaust in American Life}. Mariner Books, 2000. pages 19-21. Novick writes about how the idea of the Holocaust was developed and its transition from the margins to the center of American dialogue
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 21-24.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 22. Reports of atrocities at concentration camps increased in 1942, but could be confusing and contradictory. One such was the report from German businessman Gerhard Reigner, whose informant claimed to see Jewish corpses made into soap – which later proved to be false
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 65
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 67
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 131. There was hope that, by being perceived not as victims but like others, it would normalize the image of the Jew. Early on there was also a false belief that those who had survived had done so by terrible means such as siding with the Soviets or giving up family members
talk about their experiences to a larger audience, listeners were also reluctant to hear what they had been through. With no public outlet, it seemed that the Holocaust would be confined to history, with survivors looking forward instead of in the past.\textsuperscript{18}

Along with no sense of distinct Jewish suffering, there was not a lot of public discourse concerning Jewish experiences in Europe during World War II. Part of this can be blamed on the shifting ideologies in the United States. During the war, Nazi Germany was seen as the enemy, with Soviets as an ally. This changed with the start of the Cold War in 1947; Soviets were now perceived as the enemy, and Germany as an ally. Since there was a need for turnaround and public acceptance of this new view, there was more of a focus on the dangers of Communism rather than the previous atrocities of the Germans. “Displaced persons” who were victims of Stalin had a more central focus than Jewish individuals during the early period of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{19} Postwar years saw no provisions for religious commemoration, and no monuments or memorials constructed. Novick discusses a number of reasons that Jewish persecution during World War II was not publicly talked about. There was a sense that the Holocaust was in the past, and the general public needed to focus on the future and what may happen to them. The dropping of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and its possible implications for a new era of nuclear war, had a more personal impact on American citizens in the immediate years after World War II. When there was dialogue about the Holocaust, it focused on courage and heroism rather than death and destruction, as seen by the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising being a prominent symbol during the time.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 83
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 85-88. Since the Jewish community was often associated with Communism, they did not want to reignite this idea. Postwar years saw much less anti-Semitic discourse in the public sphere, as well as Nazism
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid 115-123
Perceptions began to change during the 1960s, with a new readiness to talk about the Holocaust instead of relegating it to the past. While the Cold War was still going on, constraints on talking about the events were not as tight due to factors such as the death of Stalin and fall of McCarthy. William L. Shirer’s book, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, put Nazi Germany back into the American public conscious, though it only devoted a small portion of its 1,200 pages to discuss Jewish experience. Perhaps most significantly during this time was the capture and subsequent trial of Adolph Eichmann. American newspapers were initially filled with editorials arguing against Israel’s methods of capturing Eichmann in Argentina and transporting him to Israel for trial. 21 While there was still a reluctance to portray Jews as victims, they would nevertheless be publicly sharing their stories of abuse for the proceedings. This was the first time the Holocaust received extended television coverage, which lasted for the spring and summer of 1961. 22 Jewish agencies expected backlash from the trial; instead, it was not as bad as anticipated, and there seemed to be a shift to more American Jews feeling open about discussing war and persecution experiences. As Novick writes, “this was the first time that what we now know as the Holocaust was presented to the American public as an entity in its own right, distinct from Nazi barbarism in general. In the United States, the word “Holocaust” first became firmly attached to the murder of European Jewry as a result of the trial.” 23

During the 1970s and in the years since, the Holocaust has come to be presented as an American, and not specifically Jewish, memory; once of the most important ways in which it entered the American consciousness was through the 1978 miniseries *Holocaust*, with almost

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21 Novick, 128-132
22 Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust*. New York: Oxford Univerity Press. 1999. Pages 83-84. The trials consisted of 114 sessions from April 11 through August 14. This was likely the first time that Americans had heard the word Holocaust used to describe Nazi persecution
23 Novick, page 133
100 million viewers watching the nine-hour program.\textsuperscript{24} In the years between the highly televised Eichmann trial and this series, the Holocaust emerged as a regular subject in television through documentaries and installments of drama series.\textsuperscript{25} The show was centered on a fictional family but included historic figures such as Eichmann. The miniseries, with its weeks of advertising and high popularity, made some feel that the Holocaust had now fully arrived into the American scene.\textsuperscript{26} After this, the Holocaust remained a prominent topic in the media through the 1980s and 1990s. Jews, who once pushed away the idea of themselves as victims, were now portrayed as survivors and were symbolic of Jewish suffering and endurance.\textsuperscript{27} As Werner Weinberg recalls, “Immediately after the war, we were liberated prisoners. In subsequent years we were included in the term “DPs” or displaced persons. In the US we were sometimes generously called the “new Americans”...But one day I noticed that I had been reclassified as a survivor.”\textsuperscript{28}

Steven Spielberg’s notion of collecting testimonies came at a time where Holocaust dialogue and discourse was on the rise after decades of gradual changes. This change and openness to discussion was necessary for the archive’s success. The idea to sit down and interview Jewish survivors about their experiences was at this point not a revolutionary concept thought of by the director. In fact, at the time he was releasing his film, other organizations were already established and had interviewed individuals for their own purposes.\textsuperscript{29} But the goals aimed for by Spielberg were of a more global and all-encompassing reach than these earlier

\textsuperscript{24} Novick, page 209
\textsuperscript{25} Shandler, pages 135-137. Jews and the Holocaust would appear in primetime shows as a type of guest performers
\textsuperscript{26} Shandler, pages 170-176. Along with acclaim came harsh criticism from figures such as Elie Wiesel, who felt that it trivialized events and turned them into a soap-opera. The Fortunoff Archive run by Yale University, also felt experiences were being trivialized, and went further by saying television was trying to take away survivor stories
\textsuperscript{27} Novick, page 273
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, page 67
\textsuperscript{29} Interview with Karen Jungblut, February 14, 2013. Karen was hired as an interviewer by the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in Berlin in December 1995. After interviewing about a dozen survivors, she went on to help develop the indexing and cataloging methodology used to search testimonies. She is the current Director of Research and Documentation
endeavors. Rather than sticking to a certain region, he started in Los Angeles and branched out into other parts of the United States and Europe. With his status as a high profile and highly respected director, he had both the money and the public clout to collect a large amount of testimonies. Spielberg originally hoped to create 50,000 individual documentaries about survivors, with the intention of preserving their stories for their family members. However, he soon realized that this would be too huge of an undertaking and not financially feasible. Instead, the idea of conducting the same amount of interviews where survivors got the chance to share their stories not just with their families but with a worldwide audience was soon conceived.

Spielberg officially set up his non-profit in 1994 after consulting with his producers, and named it the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (Shoah meaning ‘catastrophe’ in Hebrew and an alternative word used to describe the Holocaust). The original board consisted of his lawyer, accountant and business manager. At the time of its start, the internet was still a relatively new conception and digital video was extremely expensive. While they wanted to make video tapes and then digitize them, in the beginning BetaCam video tapes were used to record testimonies. Computer engineer Sam Gusman was hired to figure out how to search, catalog and index these future video tapes; this was the origin of the Visual History Archive.

To start the initial interviewing process and attract the attention of interested participants, ads were placed in Los Angeles Jewish community newspapers in 1994. Still working with his small and personal staff, new people with previous experience in library work were hired to help with organization of the video testimonies. Soon people began responding to the advertisements with requests to be interviewed. The organization established bases in Chicago and New York.

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30 Interview with Douglas Greenberg, 1/18/13
31 Ibid
32 USC Shoah Foundation Website: Preserving the Archive
before finally expanding into Europe. Careful coordinator was needed to ensure that all interviews were conducted in the same manner and properly stored.\textsuperscript{33}

The final numbers collected are pretty staggering: between 1994 and 2002 the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation was able to surpass their initial goal and collect 51,294 individual testimonies from 56 countries and in 32 languages, of which 48,968 were from Jewish survivors. The 120,000 hours of interviews were done in collaboration with 2,300 interview candidates, 1,000 videographers and over 100 regional coordinators.\textsuperscript{34} What is especially interesting is that apparently not one of the survivors was asked by the foundation to provide their testimonies. As the reaches of the organization spread out from Los Angeles and gained global influence, individuals always reached out to them wanting to share their stories. The chance to have memories preserved for both family and a larger audience, coupled with the rise of Holocaust dialogue and backing from Stephen Spielberg, helped to make the Visual History Foundation a vast oral history database for research and education.\textsuperscript{35}

In order for the interviews to have a consistent and similar quality, despite taking place in various languages and locations worldwide, an interview methodology had to be established at the start of the project. Potential interviewers filled out an application form stating how they heard about the organization and why they were interested in participating. If accepted, all interviewers were required to go through a three day training seminar in the location they were available to work in. Day one consisted of an introduction to the Shoah Foundation, their origins and what they hoped to achieve; a local historian would also be brought in to give background on

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid
\textsuperscript{34}USC Shoah Foundation Website: The Archive: Collecting Testimonies. The website provides a PDF that gives an extensive breakdown on interview locations, dates of interviews and what types of people gave testimonies
\textsuperscript{35}In 2006, there was a formal transition of the archive and its staff to USC, and is now known as the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. With educational and research aspects in mind, the partnership in USC was made in order to establish ties and give database access to museums, institutes and universities worldwide
the area. The next two days were focused on the structure of the interviews and the methodology
the foundation wanted to establish.36

Interviews were generally broken down into three parts: what was your life like before
the Holocaust, what happened to you during the war years, and what did you do afterwards.37
Interviews were structured to be in chronological order for several reasons. By going in order
and starting with childhood and events before the war, the interviewee had a chance to get used
to the camera and telling their story to an interviewer and videographer before delving into the
more difficult subject matter. Instead of immediately talking about Holocaust experiences and
potentially being seen as a victim, there was instead room to get a full picture of the person and
talk about their whole life.38 There is a general sense when watching the testimonies that the
interviewing process was meant to be comfortable and open, with the result being a very
personal and emotional document. The majority of the interviews took place in the interviewee’s
homes, after a process of establishing a rapport with the interviewer. They also did not have to
adhere to any specific dress codes and could sit on comfortable couches or chairs. These
elements help to facilitate a sense of intimacy when watching, and make the person being
interviewed seem more relaxed and approachable.

While structured for the person to go through events in sequence, there was also a lot of
room for the individual to tell the story in their own words and at their own pace. Interviews on
average lasted for two hours, but could also go on longer depending on experiences and
memory.39 Pre-interviews were conducted between the interviewer and interviewee in order to
meet and establish a rapport, explain logistics and the format of the interview, and gain

36 Interview with Karen Jungblut, 2/14/13
37 Interview with Douglas Greenberg on Trojan Vision. USC. 23 January 2009. 13:50-14:30
38 Interview with Karen Jungblut
39 Ibid
information about the interviewee based on a Pre-Interview Questionnaire. The questionnaire was forty-four pages long and looked to establish as much factual information and specific dates as possible. Survivors were asked to give details about themselves and their immediate family members, their political and religious affiliations, economic status, primary languages and more. They were also asked about what life was like before the war, what experiences they went through during the war (whether it be placed in a camp or ghetto, if they hid and with whom, etc.), and postwar details of where they were liberated, what they went through and what they did afterwards. Based on the facts gathered when talking to the participant and through the PIQ, the interviewer would then conduct their own research in order gain a better understanding of historical context and what was going on in the countries and cities they were living in during the Holocaust. The interviews were in a sense unscripted, but it was also important to have appropriate topics or questions to bring up if needed.

While all interviews followed the same basic structure and format, the PIQ and meeting helped to show what events may be focused on during the interview. If a survivor remembered certain experiences more than others, they may spend more time detailing that information. The PIQ was also important in determining biographical information for the archive and what search terms might be indexed. The idea of using indexing search terms to organize the interviews was a concept in mind from the beginning of the collection of testimonies. Making word for word transcripts of the thousands of hours of interviews was expensive, and would not allow a user to go directly to portions of testimonies they wanted to study. Instead, they wanted a system that could connect the viewer to certain segments when it came up during the conversation. The ability to create keywords could organize the interviews based on time periods, location, and

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40 USC Shoah Foundation Interviewer Guidelines PDF
41 Ibid
experiences that they went through. People were hired to listen and watch one minute segments of testimonies, and then create English keywords to show what was being discussed. No keywords were made beforehand; instead, they were developed as the interviews were collected and catalogued. After a two year process, it was now possible for a researcher to look up specific concepts, find the interviews in which they were brought up, and jump to that particular part of the video to see what was said.

When doing research on the site, there are five ways that interviews can be looked up, several of which utilize the keywords which were formulated for the site. Quick search allows for someone to look up any words, whether they are general terms or more specific phrases. These can be filtered based on interview information such as language, gender, experience group and whether the video is available to watch immediately or in 48 hours. People search can be used when there is a specific interview you wish to view. Places search brings you to a map, where you can specify locations and find out how many testimonies mention them. The biographical search and indexing terms search both heavily utilize the indexing system. Biographical search allows you to filter results based on the different experience groups someone is considered to be a part of. For the largest group, Jewish survivors, results can be further refined based on biographical information, interview information, and experiences. This can be helpful in determining which survivors spent a substantial amount of time in cities such as Lviv. The indexing terms search allows users to search for specific concepts, phrases and locations. Multiple terms can be searched together, so that testimonies are filtered to show only those that

42 Interview with Karen Jungblut
43 Ibid. The idea of indexing emotions (crying, pauses, voice breaks, etc.) was considered, and may be a future endeavor for the organization
44 Visual History Archive, Biographical Search. Experience groups are broken up into Jewish survivors, homosexual survivors, political prisoners, Sinti and Roma survivors, war crimes trials participants, Jehovah’s witnesses survivors, liberators and liberation witnesses, rescuers and aid providers, and survivors of eugenics policies.
have both items come up during the interview. This helps to refine results and show very specific focuses and experiences.\(^\text{45}\)

When accessing the Visual History Archive and searching through the hundreds of keywords, there is an overwhelming variety of information available. Some are specific to a point that the topics only come up in a few interviews. Zamarstynow Prison, a prison in Lviv that was a site of action when Germans retook the area in 1941, is only indexed in the interview of political prisoner Wanda Ossowska.\(^\text{46}\) Others can be very open and provide a plethora of potential sources. When searching to see how many interviews referenced the city of Lviv in general, it comes up in 1,766 testimonies.\(^\text{47}\) This can create some confusion if the term is not searched alongside a more specific topic. When the term ‘Lviv’ is cataloged with a specific interview, it does not necessarily mean that the person spent any significant amount of time in the area. There are a multitude of reasons as to why the term may come up during conversation. Some political prisoners were transferred to prisons in the city, while others attended university or fled there during the war. Others may have just mentioned the area as a place where they visited or where they had relatives living. As long as the name is brought up in a segment, there is a possibility that it will be indexed and therefore searchable on the database.

The organization interviewed hundreds of Jewish survivors who at one point or another had been in Lviv during the events of the Holocaust. Their accounts provide a unique perspective on how Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish cultures interacted and clashed leading up to and during occupation. Telling their experiences decades later to an interviewer and cameraman, some

\(^{45}\) USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive Website: Search. For this project, the biographical search and indexing terms search were used to locate survivors who had experience in Lviv

\(^{46}\) VHA Website, Indexing Terms Search: Zamarstynow. Even though the word is only indexed in one interview, there is a possibility that it appears in other interviews. It may not have been indeed, or it categorized as a more general term such as ‘prison experiences’

\(^{47}\) Visual History Archive, Indexing Search Term Lwow
stories recalled from memory are more vivid than others. Unlike a written document, which goes in chronological order and sticks to proven facts, these interviews sometimes go out of sequence or mess up the order of dates and events. But they also can provide insight and information into attitudes and ideologies that may not always be focused on in other formats.

Interviews with these Lviv survivors followed the same general structure as previously discussed. Interviewees would start with general background information on the individual and what their life was like before the war. Where and when the person was born gave context to their location and how old they were when important events took place. Many interviewees looked at were born between the years 1914 and 1930. Pepa Rosenman, born in 1914, had to deal with childbirth and caring for young children during her time in Lviv and the ghetto.\textsuperscript{48} Adam Boren, born in 1929, was in primary school with local Polish children leading up the Soviet occupation and describes the increasing anti-Semitism he experienced.\textsuperscript{49} Survivors were also asked information about their parents and what they did, which shed light on their economic background; whether the person was the child of influential citizens or not could have helped to determine what they would go through during occupation by Soviets and Germans. Wolf Lichter’s father owned a linen store and his mother came from an aristocratic background. They lived comfortable before the war, and during Soviet occupation were able to stay well fed and in their house. Lichter also believes that his father’s local prominence helped him to not be taken away, as it would have caused backlash from the Jewish community.\textsuperscript{50}

Most survivors were also asked about Shabbat (the Jewish day of rest) and how they prepared for it. This helped to establish how religious their household was during the interwar period and built information

\textsuperscript{48} Visual History Archive, interview with Pepa Rosenmen, Tape 4: 2:00-5:00
\textsuperscript{49} Visual History Archive, interview with Adam Boren, Tape 1: 3:30-7:45
\textsuperscript{50} Visual History Archive, interview with Wolf Lichter. Tape 1: 3:00 and 9:15
about day to day lives before they were invaded. Some interviewees discussed the rituals they performed and how religious they considered their family, while others mention that it did not play a prominent role in their upbringing.

For Lviv in particular, much time would be focused on 1939 and how life changed for them during the brief German and then two year Soviet occupation. Interviewees would be asked if they were aware of the Nazi regime’s rise to power and if they had heard of any acts they were committing prior to the pact with the Soviet Union. Soviet occupation saw a rise in the city’s Jewish population, with thousands either fleeing or being deported from Western Poland into Lviv. Survivors discuss their day to day lives under Soviet rule and how they felt about the regime. Relations with Poles and Ukrainians and how they changed are also brought up. According to some of the Jewish survivors, there was a general sentiment among non-Jews that they welcomed the regime and supported their rule instead of the Germans. Despite the possibility of continuing school and performing day to day tasks, many disagree with the notion that they were complicit with the Soviet regime.

1941 and experiences during this time were also a focus point for interviews. With the end of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, German troops moved east and began to reclaim areas of Poland previously under Soviet occupation. Lviv was taken over in June 1941, and over the next two months pogroms would be enacted which saw thousands of Jews brutally beaten and killed by mainly Ukrainian forces, with German complicity and aid. Interviewee opinions of and interactions with Ukrainians during this time is decidedly negative. Some individuals such as Leon Finver considered them worse than the Germans, since they were not an outside force
killing indiscriminately but locals who were killing their own neighbors. Dialogue about relations with Poles would vary, with both aid and indifference experienced, but in general they were not as harshly spoken of as the Ukrainians. Survivors talk about the drastic change in their everyday lives; Jewish armbands, which were not used under Soviets, were implemented almost immediately with the arrival of the Germans; several months later, the Lviv ghetto was established and the majority of contact with gentile neighbors was severely limited or cut off entirely.

The third portion of the interview detailing what the survivor did after the war could vary greatly depending on where they were liberated and what experiences they had gone through leading up to that. Some were in concentration or death camps; others remained in the city or were hiding amongst the gentile population. Generally, they were asked what they did immediately after liberation and if they had any family members who survived. This was also the time when interviewees would talk about what they had done since the Holocaust and bring out personal photos and mementos from the time period.

Both the movie and subsequent video archive Steven Spielberg created were able to achieve a large amount of success because of the evolution of Holocaust dialogue and discourse in the United States. From an era immediately prior to World War II when there was a hope of keeping the atrocities in the past, to the emergence of Holocaust ideology and the notion of Jews as a distinct sect of victims and survivors, the change helped to not only make this project possible, but allowed for them to be produced with relatively little protest. Jewish survivors who had experiences in Lviv and were interviewed by the Shoah Foundation had similar interview structures that allowed them to talk about their life before, during and after the war. As will be

51 Visual History Archive, interview with Leon Finver. Tape 3: 4:30-6:00
detailed in the following two chapters, a particular focus could be seen on the interwar period, when many were adolescents and attending school, and the years 1939-1941, when the onset of war and occupation caused drastic changes in how they were able to lead day to day lives. The interactions that Jews had with their Polish and Ukrainian neighbors, as well as with Soviet and German occupiers, can be seen in many of the interviews. The perspectives given by these Jewish survivors help to shape an image of multicultural Lviv and how anti-Semitism and gentile relations affected Jewish lives.
Chapter 2 – Anti-Semitism and Experiences, 1918-1939

The city of Lviv has an extensive history dating back hundreds of years before the events of the Holocaust, and from the beginning was located in a region known for its cultural diversity. Established sometime in the 13th century, the town was situated on a trade route that carried items from the Baltic and Black Seas.\textsuperscript{52} The city was annexed by the Kingdom of Poland in 1387, which would have control of the area until 1772. The relatively steady rule and its reputation as a trading center created a diverse population; in the 16th century, five ethnic groups composed at least five percent of the population\textsuperscript{53}. While Christianity was the majority religion of the city, and Armenians and Germans began to adopt the Polish culture, the Jewish population remained an unassimilated group with an influence in commerce.

In 1772, Lviv was annexed to the Austrian monarchy and became the capital of Galicia\textsuperscript{54}. During this rule there was a dramatic increase in population, from 29,500 at the start of rule to 212,000 towards the end. The Jewish population rose from 18,300 in 1800 to 57,000 in 1910. The 1820 census showed that 55\% of Jews were involved in commerce, and another 24\% in crafts\textsuperscript{55}. Despite the empire granting religious equality in the mid-18th century, anti-Semitic tendencies among Poles and Ukrainians increased, allegedly as a result of educated Jewish merchants embracing the German culture of the rulers.\textsuperscript{56} In the 19th century, Ukrainians hoped to divide Galicia into a Polish west and Ukrainian east, with them retaining control of the city.\textsuperscript{57}

This plan would not come to fruition, and there remained tension among the Polish and

\textsuperscript{52} Hrytsak, Yaroslav. \textit{Lviv: A Multicultural History through the Centuries}. Harvard Ukrainian Studies, 2000. Page 48. Some historians such as Hrytak argue that Lviv has been continuously inhabited since as early as the 5th century

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, page 50. Poles comprised 38\% of the population while Ruthenians (Ukrainians) made up 24\% and Jews 8\%

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, page 54. Galicia was part of the Habsburg monarchy from 1772 until 1918. Its historical region is in between Poland and Ukraine, with Lviv considered to be in the center of the old territory

\textsuperscript{55} Encyclopedia Judaica, Second Edition Volume 13, page 289

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 290

\textsuperscript{57} Hrytsak, page 57
Ukrainian citizens, with Jews not directly involved in the conflict but still affected as bystanders. Lviv was an important cultural center for all three communities, which continued to grow and thrive into the 20th century. World War I resulted in the city and its surrounding areas taken over by the Russian Army in 1914, but Austria-Hungary was able to reclaim the territory the following year. However, at the end of the war in 1918 the monarchy collapsed, with the Polish-majority region of Galicia being granted independence.58

With monarchy rule ending at the conclusion of World War I, both Poles and Ukrainians saw the city as being integral to their own developing independence. On November 1, 1918, the Western Ukrainian National Republic was established and proclaimed Lviv as their capital, and set up military units in the city. The newly made republic hoped to control eastern Galicia, which had a large Ukrainian population and was something they had been attempting for years while under Austrian control. The Second Polish Republic and Polish majority of the city were taken by surprise, as they also regarded the area as an important part of their history and essential to retain. Since the boundaries of the Polish state had not yet been established, and the Western Ukrainian National Republic was not internationally recognized, control of the region by military force seemed to be inevitable.59

Initial fighting between the two groups was mainly concentrated in Lviv, and after two weeks the Polish army was able to break through and take control of the city. From November 21 to 23, Polish troops invaded the Ukrainian and Jewish quarters of the city and terrorized the population. Jewish men were beaten in public, and women raped. Homes and stores were looted, vandalized and burned down. The brutal treatment was carried out not only by the military, but

58 Ibid, page 62
59 Chojnowski, Andrzej. “Ukrainian-Polish War in Galicia, 1918–19.” Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine, volume 5. 1993. In both this article and November Uprising in Lviv, 1918, no mention is made of the city’s Jewish population or how it was affected by the conflict; instead, the focus is on the military campaigns between Poles and Ukrainians
local Polish civilians as well. Although some victims claim that the attackers were told they had a few days to do what they wanted with no fear of punishment, no evidence was found for this. It is true, however, that the raids and attacks of Jewish and Ukrainian neighborhoods went on for two days before participating troops were called off. Pogroms had been spreading throughout the region with the incoming Polish military; the Lviv Pogrom led to an estimated 70 to 100 Jewish deaths, and the destruction of several hundred more shops. A few hundred Ukrainian citizens were also killed, on top of the thousands who would die over the course of war with the Poles. Military conflict between Polish and Ukrainian forces continued for several months after Poland had recaptured Lviv. Thousands of soldiers from both sides had died by the time a cease fire was enacted on July 17. With the help of the Paris Peace Conference, Poland was able to establish and keep control of the city and Eastern Galicia until the beginning of World War II.

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60 Encyclopedia Judaica, Second Edition volume 13 page 290-291. Other sources list the Jewish death toll lower at around 52, while others claim it could be as high as 150
61 Map showing regions of Polish control from 1918-1938. Lviv is located bottom center under the Polish name Lwow, and also has a flag marking the 1918/1919 uprising
While the Western Ukrainian National Republic’s government went into exile, the regions now under Polish control still had high populations of Ukrainian citizens. Tension continued between Poles and Ukrainians, and both still expressed anti-Semitic attitudes towards the Jewish population.62

Throughout the extensive history of the city, the Jewish population was often not only witness to tensions and fighting between the Poles and Ukrainians, but also directly affected. Anti-Semitism was experienced throughout the centuries, more strongly during some points than others. Christian-led pogroms were directed at the Jews in the 16th century, but during Austrian rule they received more support from their rulers.63 Despite not taking part in the Polish-Ukrainian war, and remaining an unassimilated group, they were attacked and sustained casualties during the Lviv Pogrom. Some documents claim that Jews were attacked because over the weeks of fighting in and around Lviv, they appeared to be in support of the Ukrainians fight against the Poles. While for Jews 1918 Lwow signified pogroms that killed dozens of innocent bystanders, for the Poles it symbolized their own victimization at the hands of the Jews.64

Despite the brutality of the war and continuing tensions, during the interbellum period Lviv remained a large and important cultural center for Poles, Ukrainians and especially Jews. It was Poland’s third most populous city behind Warsaw and Lodz and, according to the 1931 census, the three main languages in the city were Polish, Yiddish and Ukrainian.65 The Jewish population rose to 110,000 by the end of the 1930s, and accounted for one-third of the total

62 Chojnowski
63 Ibid, page 53. Policies established that put an end to some of the religious discriminations towards the Jews helped to give more access to education and established Lviv as an important center of the Jewish Enlightenment in the 19th century
64 Engel, David. “Lwow 1918: The Transmutation of a Symbol and its Legacy in the Holocaust”. Pages 32-35. Engel believes that this Polish opinion of Jews undermining their attempts at establishing control in Lviv could have affected the nature of their relationship with them during German occupation in 1941
65 Encyclopedia Judaica. Polish made up 63.5%, Yiddish 24.5% and Ukrainian 7.5%. Ruthenians who did not adopt a Ukrainian ethnic identity made up an additional 3.5%
population. Jewish culture and education continued to grow; numerous Jewish high schools, a Hebrew college for Judaic studies and dozens of synagogues were present in Lviv. Three newspapers, the Chwila, Lemberger Togblat, and Opinia, were published, and the large amount of printers in the city made it a main center for the production of Hebrew books. Though cultural life was growing, professional endeavors were becoming worse. In commerce, they were having less of an impact than in previous years when they were the majority. An economic crisis that hit Poland during the 1930s caused many businesses to close and Jews to be fired from their jobs.

Most of the Jewish survivors that were interviewed for the Visual History Foundation were born around the end of Austrian rule and subsequent emergence of the Second Polish Republic. This is likely due to the time frame of Polish rule as well as the period in which the archive interviews were conducted. Lviv was controlled by Poland from 1918 until the start of World War II, when the Soviet Union took over the region in 1939. Interviews took place over fifty years later, during the mid-1990s. By the time this medium was made available to survivors, many people who were born before the Soviet regime would have been in their eighties and nineties, or already deceased. Those who were born during Austrian rule and able to be interviewed were young children at the time and generally did not recall specific details of the regime. The same is true for the 1918 Lwow pogroms; many survivors were either very young or not yet born when it took place, and heard secondhand information about it from their parents.

66 Ibid, page 290  
67 Ibid, 291. Lviv was considered a main center for book production for both Eastern Europe and the Balkans  
68 Ibid 292  
69 See for example, the VHA interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, who was born in Lviv in 1914 during Austrian rule. She did not recall specific experiences with Austrians, and did not start attending school until the year after Polish rule began
Interviewed survivors from Lviv were generally adolescents, teens and young adults who grew up, worked and went to school during in a very specific atmosphere of Polish rule. Despite several cultural outlets and Jewish neighborhoods where there was freedom to safely express religion, the aura of anti-Semitism which had permeated the region for centuries was still prevalent. The 1918 pogrom, taking place during a conflict that Jews were not directly involved in, saw them attacked and their businesses destroyed by Polish military and citizens. Both Poles and Ukrainians expressed anti-Semitism and had conflicted interactions with Jews during the interwar period. Whether through words or actions, and taking place in various public spheres, there was a general theme among Jewish interviewees of tense relations with their gentile neighbors.

Admittedly, there were some interviewed survivors that grew up in Lviv who could not recall being personally victimized by Poles or Ukrainians during this time period. Helena Flaum, born in 1927, did not experience anti-Semitism growing up and said she had “nice neighbors” and no problems. However, she recalled one experience where she was running from public school to her Hebrew class when a Catholic priest grabbed her and asked why he did not see her in his class. When she told him “I am the follower of Moses’ teaching”, he “let go of me as if I was suddenly something that became dirty. That feeling, I have never forgot.”70 While she claims to not personally remember any anti-Semitic experiences, she did see other Jewish children who were called dirty and lazy, laughed at and physically abused71. She felt that Jewish children were afraid of the Christian children and vice versa because “they did not have a chance to know them…they were kept separate and that probably caused a lot of misunderstanding

70 VHA Interview with Helena Flaum, Tape 1: 15:30-16:10
71 VHA Interview with Helena Flaum, tape 1: 15:00-17:15. Flaum does not specify if it was Ukrainians or Poles that she witnessed abusing other Jewish children
Lidia Eichenholz, born in 1924, came from a prosperous family and spent her childhood years in Lviv. Before the war when she went to public school, she did not feel much anti-Semitism; she knew that it existed, but it did not come close to her. She mentions that her family was not Orthodox, and her father was a prestigious man who employed Polish workers, which may have contributed to this.

Despite making up one-third of the population and having a presence in the region for centuries, some Jewish survivors who were interviewed perceived themselves as outsiders in the city. This idea of ‘otherness’ and sense of isolation made them feel like they were not fully integrated into the city or with the gentile residents. Wolf Lichter, born in 1930, was one of five children. His father owned a cloth, linen and tapestry business and his mother came from an aristocratic family. They grew up leading a comfortable life in a Jewish neighborhood, but he felt that despite this they were not on the same level as Poles.

I knew that the Jew was not an equal member of society. I knew that the Jew was not to be seen in non-Jewish neighborhood. I did not expect to see a Jewish policeman, officer, or government official…We felt as Jews living in Poland, not Polish Jews.

Adam Boren, born a year earlier than Lichter, also felt like an outsider in the city. He had family and ancestors in the Galicia region going back to the 14th century, the same time period when Lviv was first established. Yet despite his historic roots in the area, he did not feel that others considered him a true citizen. While he believed that anyone who had lived there that long should be perceived as a member of that society, the Jews in general were not seen that way.

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72 VHA Interview with Helena Flaum, Tape 1: 17:30-19:00
73 VHA Interview with Lidia Eichenholz, Tape 1: 5:00-7:00
74 VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter, Tape 1: 14:00-16:52
75 VHA Interview with Adam Boren, Tape 4 17:00-17:20
Lucyna Berkowicz expressed similar sentiments: “Jews always know in Poland that they are Jews.”\(^{76}\) They did not necessarily have to be the target of constant attacks to know that they were not on the same level as gentiles.

During this time period there were no overt governmental laws which discriminated against the Jews. However, a sense of feeling less than the other citizens was still felt. Samuel Drix remembers that when he grew up in the 1910s and 1920s, they had the same rights as every other citizen in Poland. But despite this, it seemed that Jews could not get some higher placing jobs in the government or army; instead, these positions would go to Poles.\(^{77}\) Luisa Hershkowitz also recalls a general atmosphere of Polish anti-Semitism which was not overt due to the policies of the country, but as the years went on they became more open with their acts. Jews in general would be mistreated, but she says it became worse after 1936. She remembers seeing Jewish men with beards who were mistreated and had their facial hair pulled by Poles, because they stood out more.\(^{78}\) William Weiss’ father owned a store that furnished military supplies for the Polish Army, and had himself been involved with them during the war. Despite this, they did not want his father to deliver the supplies to the buildings, because he was Jewish.\(^{79}\)

When talking about Jewish-gentile relations or childhood anti-Semitic experiences, many of the interviewees would indicate more experiences with either Poles or Ukrainians. Sometimes this was due to the fact that during the interbellum period they mainly received negative rhetoric from only one of the groups, while having friendlier (or at least less tense) interactions with the other. It could also have been due to the amount of time spent with them. Some Jews were more

\(^{76}\) VHA Interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, Tape 1 14:40. Berkowicz was born in 1914, when Lviv (she refers to it as Lemberg) was still under Austrian occupation. Being only four when there was a transition from Austrian to Polish rule, she does not specifically recall what life was like from 1914-1918 or the 1918 Lviv pogroms
\(^{77}\) VHA Interview with Samuel Drix, Tape 1: 11:20-12:00
\(^{78}\) VHA Interview with Luisa Hornstein, Tape 1: 16:45
\(^{79}\) VHA Interview with William Weiss, Tape 1: 29:00
isolated from gentiles because they lived in heavily Jewish neighbors, while others lived in mixed areas that had them more closely confined with Poles and Ukrainians. Jews and Poles seemed to have more interactions with one another in school settings. While there were Hebrew schools that Jewish adolescents had the option of attending, many of them attended public schools with local Polish (and sometimes Ukrainian) youth. A few interviewees had positive experiences in schools and did not remember any specific instances of mistreatment. Edward Spicer was accepted to a government school at the age of 11, which had about ten Jewish students out of over one thousand. Despite this, he remembers being treated fairly and did not have any specific problems with students or teachers. However, it was at these schools that many were at the receiving end of anti-Semitic discourse and unfair treatment.

Kurt Lewin grew up in a religious household in Lviv, as his father was a rabbi in a local synagogue. Despite this, he attended a single-sex public school through the sixth grade that had a mixture of Jews, Ukrainians and Poles. He was seen as a “curiosity” among the students because he did not attend school on Saturdays for Shabbat. Lewin talked about the effect that his different religion had on his schooling experience:

The minute religion was introduced, you had the first signs of anti-Semitism and friction between the kids. The Poles were antagonistic towards Ukrainians and both against Jews…this manifested in fights…it was a way of life. Jews had to defend themselves or be beaten up.

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80 VHA Interview with Edward Spicer, Tape 1 5:00-7:00. Spicer also mentions that his father was a decorated World War I hero who regarded as a hero by Poles. This, plus his affluent upbringing, might have had an influence on his experiences with Polish students.

81 VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 1: 25:30-27:30
He estimates that from the age of eight, he was exposed to anti-Semitism from his schoolmates. In order to protect himself, he would fight back when antagonized. His father encouraged him to defend himself because even if the Poles did not respect him, he should respect himself.\textsuperscript{82}

For other Lviv survivors, primary school was also a place where they experienced tense relations with the Poles, but it did not escalate into fights the way it did with Kurt Levin. Adam Boren attended a Polish-Catholic school and went through anti-Semitic experiences until he left. To him, the anti-Semitic attitudes of the Poles seemed almost “inbred” and an everyday occurrence.\textsuperscript{83} Wolf Lichter went to public school in the morning and cheder in the afternoon for religious education. Between the two, he remembers not having any Polish friends during his public education; all of his school friends were Jews who attended the religious school with him.\textsuperscript{84} Bina Blumenfield attended an all-girls public school with Jews, Poles and Ukrainians. She said was always frightened to go to school, and feared being beaten. Because of this, her school friends consisted of only her fellow Jewish counterparts.\textsuperscript{85} Pepa Rosenman attended primary school with Poles until she was ten years old and recalls one particular experience she had with two sisters that made her realize she was different from her peers.

We played around in school, so they invited me once to their home, and we spent a very lovely afternoon. The next day they told me, “we are very sorry but we can’t play with you anymore”. For me it was something new. Why? The mother told them that they can’t play with me and can’t invite me because I’m Jewish. And that was when I really felt

\textsuperscript{82} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 1: 28:00-28:15  
\textsuperscript{83} VHA Interview with Adam Boren, Tape 1: 8:00-9:10  
\textsuperscript{84} VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter, Tape 1: 14:30  
\textsuperscript{85} VHA Interview with Bina Blumenfield, Tape 1: 16:15-17:00
different. From this day on somehow instinctively I was clinging to my Jewish friends and Jewish environment.86

Gymnasiums and places of higher education also had tense relations between Poles and Jews. After finishing sixth grade, William Weiss attended a gymnasium in Lviv, where he was the only Jew and felt isolated from his peers. “Since I was the only one in the class, they put me in the last bench. They would not get along with me, would not have me as their own, would not play with me.”87 Lucyna Berkowicz, who did not remember experiencing any sort of anti-Semitism in early schooling, came across some anti-Semitism from Poles when she went to a co-educational bookkeeping school.88 Bill Koenig said that he saw well educated Poles beating up the small amount of Jews who attended university with them.89 Samuel Drix, who attended medical school leading up the occupation, remembers that as the years went on less and less Jews were being accepted into his school until around 1937, when there was almost none.90

While there were generally more day to day interactions between Poles and Jews in schools, Jews also had fraught relations and anti-Semitic experiences with the Ukrainian population of Lviv. Some, such as Bill Koenig, got along better with them than they did with the Poles. He grew up in a Polish neighborhood but during the interwar period he made friends with Ukrainians. When Poles would beat up Jewish university students, he remembers groups of Jews and Ukrainians banding together to fight back.91 Edward Spicer, on the other hand, made friends with Poles but said he could never make a friend among the Ukrainians. “We attended the same

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86 VHA Interview with Pepa Rosenman, Tape 1: 1:345-5:30
87 VHA Interview with William Weiss, Tape 1: 12:50-13:50
88 VHA Interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, Tape 1: 15:00-16:30. Berkowicz does not specify in what ways she felt singled out as a Jew, but does say that it was not too bad and she could handle
89 VHA Interview with Bill Koenig, Tape 2: 00:30-2:30. Koenig said the Poles would also mock the Jews by saying “it’s our streets, but the Jews own the building”
90 VHA Interview with Samuel Drix, Tape 1: 11:20-12:00
91 VHA Interview with Bill Koenig, Tape 2: 1:00-5:00. During Soviet and German occupation, his experiences with his Polish and Ukrainian neighbors would drastically change
classes but no matter what you tried, they always had on an expression of anger. You could never get close to them.”

Confrontations and interactions with Poles and Ukrainians also happened in public settings such as the streets of mixed neighborhoods. William Weiss grew up in a mixed area of town where, similar to other survivor testimonies, he was called a “dirty Jew” and felt the gentiles thought they were better than him. He also mentioned that there were local parks that you could not go to if you were Jewish. While nowhere did it explicitly say they were not allowed, “Everyone knew you were not supposed to go there because if they found you and recognized you as Jewish they used to beat you up.”

Both Rose Speisman and Bina Blumenfield lived in neighborhoods which had Ukrainian and Jewish inhabitants. Speisman noted that there were often skirmishes between Ukrainians and Poles, which she believed was due to the fact that the city was incorporated into Poland but the Ukrainians still wanted Lviv to be theirs. These fights could also affect the Jewish portion of the residents. When she witnessed a Ukrainian demonstration, the Polish police arrived and started to beat them with sticks. She ran away but was also beaten up because they were not sure if she had been part of the demonstration.

Blumenfield lived on the outskirts of the city; while the area was normally quiet and relatively peaceful, it could get tense when the Ukrainians began to drink.

If the non-Jewish population, the neighbors, did not go into the saloons and drink a lot, it was quiet. When they came home and they had too much to drink, they would naturally look for the Jews to beat them up. So the Jewish people would sit under closed doors and not go out at all. Even though it could have been the middle of the afternoon, nobody

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92 VHA Interview with Edward Spicer, Tape 1: 11:00-14:00
93 VHA Interview with William Weiss, Tape 1: 17:00-19:00
94 VHA Interview with Rose Speisman, Tape 2: 1:00-2:30
would dare open the door, because we knew that somebody was going to get hurt from
the Ukrainian people.\textsuperscript{95}

Several interviews mention that there was a heightened fear of anti-Semitism and attacks
during certain holidays, specifically Easter and Christmas. These sentiments were expressed
about both Poles and Ukrainians. Bill Koenig grew up poor in a mixed neighborhood with his
three siblings. He recalls that Polish people always hated the Jews, but around Christmastime
“they always wanted to have a Jew at the head table of the house…to them it was an honor.”\textsuperscript{96}
He talks about how since Christmas celebrated the birth of Christ, they wanted Jews in their
presence in order for them to acknowledge it. But “take a jump later, like when it came Easter
time, look out, you could not stay on the street, because you killed Christ. We were Christ killers
then.”\textsuperscript{97} During Easter, Poles would call him dirty Jew and throw eggs at him, but acknowledged
that it depended on the neighborhood where you were brought up. Growing up in a Polish
neighborhood, he had more problems with them but got along well with Ukrainians.\textsuperscript{98} Wolf
Lichter also experienced heightened problems with Poles, but unlike Koenig his bad memories
center on Christmas. He recalled being told by his parents to be home on time because there
would be many drunks that would go around and take revenge on Jews. His brother was caught
in a non-Jewish neighborhood during this time and beaten up by a Polish youth.\textsuperscript{99}

Wanda Mehr grew up on the outskirts of Lviv in a Ukrainian populated neighborhood,
and recalls not having many good neighbors or experiences with the locals. While there was

\textsuperscript{95} VHA Interview with Bina Blumenfield, Tape 1: 14-50-16:05
\textsuperscript{96} VHA Interview with Bill Koenig, Tape 1: 25:00-25:40
\textsuperscript{97} VHA Interview with Bill Koenig, Tape 1:25:30-27:00
\textsuperscript{98} VHA Interview with Bill Koenig, Tape 1: 27:00-28:00
\textsuperscript{99} VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter, Tape 1: 16:45-17:30
always general strife between her and her neighbors, she remembers December being a time of worry and unrest due to the possibility of being attacked:

It was very hard to live and scary to live when it came to Christmastime…it was like in the dark ages. We were afraid to go out because they used to beat up Jews, especially Ukrainians, because we killed Jesus. It was religious grounds. They used to beat up Jews in the streets on the day before Christmas.\textsuperscript{100}

Mehr recalled Jews being afraid to go out in the evenings for fear of attacks from specifically Ukrainians. Since she lived in a Ukrainian neighborhood, she had more interactions with them and was not sure if Jews had any problems with Poles during the holidays.

In general, Jews growing up in Lviv were able to lead relatively stable lives while experiencing various forms of conflict with Polish and Ukrainian neighbors. Different types of public outlets led to Jews undergoing taunts and attacks; even if not experienced firsthand, survivors were aware of anti-Semitism in Poland and had a fear of being singled out. Soviet occupation in 1939 would lead to new dynamics among the city’s residents, as they coped with the new rule and ongoing challenges with the gentiles.

\textsuperscript{100} VHA Interview with Wanda Mehr, Tape 4: 17:50-20:40. She did not specify her age or birth date and it was not provided in the biographical information page on the archive
Chapter 3 – Experiences with Neighbors and Occupiers, 1939-1941

With the majority of survivors interviewed for the Visual History Archive being born and raised in Lviv during Polish rule, they provide a uniquely Jewish perspective of the city’s atmosphere and relations with gentiles. The interwar period showed that there was opportunity for Jewish citizens to experience their culture through various outlets. While many attended public primary and high school with Poles, there were also Jewish schools for secondary and higher education. Jewish neighborhoods and synagogues allowed for plenty of interaction and a sense of identity. At the same time, interviews show that they were facing anti-Semitic rhetoric and attacks from Polish and Ukrainian neighbors. Most of these occurred in school or other public forums, where interactions with non-Jewish residents were more likely to occur. Some survivors do not recall experiencing anti-Semitism growing up, while others claim it did not happen to them personally but they were aware of it or had friends and relatives who faced problems. Other survivors remember personal attacks at school, on the streets and in neighborhoods where there was a mix of Jewish and gentile residents. Certain times of the year, such as Christmas, were felt to be a more dangerous time for Jewish individuals. There was also a sentiment of ‘otherness’ among the Jews; despite being established in the regions, sometimes dating back centuries, they still felt distinctly apart and separate from the rest of the population.

In the beginning of 1939, Jews made up roughly one-third of Lviv’s population, and had the third largest Jewish population in Poland. While some interviewees claimed to have no knowledge of Germany’s rising power or policies during the 1930s, others had a sense that they were a threat. On August 23, 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed. The non-
aggression treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany ensured that the Soviets would remain uninvolved in the upcoming European war. In return, they would infiltrate and retain control of Eastern Europe, including Estonia, Latvia and Eastern Poland up to Warsaw. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and two weeks later Lviv fell under their control. The Polish army, busy on the western front and unaware of Soviet intentions, were not able to organize a strong resistance against the Red Army. On September 17, the Soviet Union invaded Poland and five days later would annex Eastern Poland, with Lviv now becoming part of Soviet territory.

Jan Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1988. Pages 8-13. Soviets did not want to look like they were collaborating with Germany and hoped that their initial troops could cross into Poland under the pretense that they were protecting Ukrainians and Belorussians from German troops.

Ibid, 17. USSR gained 250,000 square kilometers of territory and 13.5 million new subjects, while sustaining less than 3,000 casualties.

Ibid. Map of Poland showing the parts of the country which were controlled by the German Reich, the General Government, and Soviet Occupation. Seen in Gross and copied from Timothy Snyder, “To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem Once and for All”: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943-1947. Online. 1999. Page 90.
Soviet rule was generally more favorably accepted by the Jews, as the alternative would have been Germany. There was a belief that socialist rule would help to give them equal treatment and less anti-Semitism, which they had been experiencing for centuries. Ukrainians and Poles accused the Jews of being Communist sympathizers who openly welcomed the Red Army and wanted to see the destruction of the Polish state. While some Jews were sympathetic and open to Communist rule, in general most simply did not want to be controlled by Germany. In the few days between German and Soviet control of the area in mid-September, several administrative areas of Lviv reported murders of Jews at the hands of the Germans. Prominent Jewish citizens were rounded up and executed in Przemysl, and allegedly with Ukrainian aid. Soviets were seen as the “lesser evil” when they took over and did not immediately begin to round up and kill Jews.

The Jewish population of the city swelled in 1939 after occupation. Refugees and families fleeing from German-occupied Western Poland to the Soviet-controlled east began to settle in Lviv. Once with a population hovering around 100,000 it increased to about 150,000 throughout the duration of Soviet rule. Despite accusations of collaboration and sympathies towards the Soviets, the Jewish population was still negatively affected by the occupation. Jewish organizations and institutions were closed and Soviet curriculum was required in Jewish schools. The economic elite, comprised mainly of Poles and Jews, were targeted, arrested and deported; others who were accused of anti-Soviet activities were allegedly arrested and deported to Siberia. Yet despite this, the majority of Jews were still able to hold jobs, attend school and

105 Mick, page 343. Mick argues that equality and less anti-Semitism were used as the most important reasons to justify pro-Soviet sympathies
106 Gross, 30-34
107 Encyclopedia Judaica. Some estimates guess that the Jewish population could have reached 200,000 by 1940, when Soviets began deporting citizens to Siberia
108 Encyclopedia Judaica, page 291
move freely throughout the different parts of the city. This would abruptly change when Germany broke their treaty with the USSR and began to move east into Soviet territory.

On June 22, 1941 Germany invaded Eastern Poland, and were on the outskirts of Lviv by the end of the month. Soviet forces evacuated and began to move east, but not before killing the majority of prisoners they had been holding in various parts of the city. Reactions to the incoming Nazi regime that was going to now control the city varied greatly. Jews remained inside their homes, some more aware than others of German attitudes and potential actions towards them. While some reports claim Poles greeted Germans in a friendly and sympathetic manner, others say they remained indifferent to the transitioning of occupiers. Ukrainians were said to have enthusiastically greeted German forces and welcomed them into the city.109

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109 Mick, 347. One Jewish primary source claims that the Polish citizens greeted Germans joyfully, but no others mention this. Several Jewish authors do agree that Ukrainians welcomed German forces and led them into the city.

110 German map of the General Government, 1943 – Lviv is indicated under the name Lemberg
Reports of Ukrainian collaboration with Germans were prevalent in Jewish eyewitness accounts. Immediately upon the arrival of the Germans on June 30, pogroms were enacted which lasted until July 3 and resulted in several thousand Jewish deaths.\(^{111}\) This was sparked by the NKVD’s mass execution of prisoners at Brygidki, Lackiego Street and Zamarstynowska prisons as they fled the city and retreated east. While those murdered included Jewish intellectuals and activists, there was also a substantial Polish and Ukrainian population that was killed.\(^{112}\) The Soviet prison guards evacuation of Lviv, and Polish and Ukrainian belief that the NKVD had Jewish members and supporters, made the Jewish population a primary target for revenge. A local Ukrainian militia was formed which captured Jews, took them to the prisons and forced them to dig up the bodies of the murdered prisoners. The Jews were beaten and mistreated throughout the process, and many were killed afterwards. Ukrainians and Germans would walk the streets together to hunt out individuals.\(^{113}\) Men, women and children were beaten on the streets and assembled in front of the prisons to be paraded in front of large crowds. The actions taken against the Jews seemed to be mostly led by the Ukrainians. German military authorities allowed the anti-Semitic violence to continue without stepping in while they spread anti-Jewish propaganda via pamphlets and posters.\(^{114}\) The German-controlled Ukrainian Auxiliary Police and Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN, formed in 1929) helped to lead the persecution of Jewish citizens during this time.


\(^{112}\) Ibid, 348-350. The NKVD was the police organization of the Soviet Union and responsible for rounding up and imprisoning Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish intellectuals, political activists and people of influence. Before leaving the city, they had murdered at least 3,000 prisoners and disposed of them in mass graves.

\(^{113}\) Ibid 349. Eyewitnesses recognized some of the perpetrators as Ukrainians because of their blue and gold armbands and the types of insults they would use against the Jews.

\(^{114}\) Ibid 351. Mick claims there is no evidence that Germans were responsible for the pogroms, and the first Nazi killing squads did not arrive until after the pogrom had started.
On July 15, two weeks after the end of the first pogrom, Jews were required to wear Star of David armbands which demarcated them as separate from the rest of the population.\textsuperscript{115} Anti-Semitic sentiments and Ukrainian actions against the Jews continued after the end of the first pogrom. From July 25 to 27, German authorities allowed for Jews to be robbed, tortured and killed by townspeople without any reprisal. Auxiliary policemen and locals participated in what is now known as the ‘Petliura Days’; police would go house to house targeting specific individuals while also bringing men, women and children to prisons, where they were tortured and murdered. Ukrainians, being familiar with the city and its inhabitants, were able to tell Germans where the Jews lived and where they might be hiding.\textsuperscript{116} Over the course of these two pogroms, an estimated five to six thousand Jews were killed by the Ukrainians and Einsatzgruppen.\textsuperscript{117} Lviv quickly went from a Soviet occupied location where there was some chance to lead normal day to day lives to a German controlled city where harsh persecution from the invaders and locals was immediate upon their arrival. Lviv was incorporated into the General Government in August, and by October the Janowska Road Camp, a labor camp which would later turn into an extermination camp, was established. By the fall of 1941, the Lviv ghetto was created and those Jews who had not already been killed or fled east with the Soviets were required to stay in the designated neighborhoods.

Interviewed survivors who were raised in Lviv and witnessed the transition from Polish to Soviet to German rule were able to talk about how their lives were changed, and how their interactions with gentile neighbors shifted, during these various phases of occupation.

\textsuperscript{115} Encyclopedia Judaica, page 291
\textsuperscript{116} Mick, 351-353. The pogrom was named after Symon Petliura, a Ukrainian politician who led Ukraine in their battle for independence following the 1917 Russian Revolution
\textsuperscript{117} Various sources, including Encyclopedia Judaica and Christoph Mick. It is estimated that during the first pogrom, 700 Jews were killed initially and then another 3,500 more by the Einsatzgruppen. During the Petliura Days, around 2,000 Jews were shot and killed in the span of 3 days.
In 1939, some interviewees initially had optimism when they realized that of the two possibilities, their city was to be occupied by the Soviets. Propaganda that was coming to the Jewish citizens prior to 1939 made them feel like they might have a better life under the Soviets. Leon Berk was initially glad the Soviets came in. “It was a certain sense of relief, because whatever it would be we thought it was better than to be under the Germans.” Edward Spicer recalls: “In a way we were elated, because of all the propaganda that we heard…then we faced reality which was entirely different than what we heard.”\(^{118}\) Lucyna Berkowicz, who enjoyed reading, remembered reading and hearing stories about how in the USSR everyone was equal and that Jews lived like everyone else. She felt it was the type of government that she might want to live under in Poland.\(^{119}\) Berkowicz and Spicer would say later in their interviews that they came to regard Soviet control in a less positive light than what they initially anticipated. All three of these survivors did see that the arrival of the Soviets initially opened up educational opportunities for Jews. Occupation allowed Berk to continuing his medicinal studies. Spicer graduated from school three weeks before Soviets entered the city. He had attended a government school which had only ten or so Jewish students. But when the Soviets came in, “all of the doors opened wide and before you knew it half the students were Jews.”\(^{120}\) Berkowicz grew up poor, one of six siblings and living in a one room home on one salary. She started to work at a factory after seven years of public school because she knew she could not afford to go to university. However, she was able to go when the Soviets took over, because the education was free and she could attend despite being a working woman.\(^{121}\)

\(^{118}\) VHA Interview with Edward Spicer, Tape 1: 12:00-14:00
\(^{119}\) VHA Interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, Tape 2: 10:00-12:15. Berkowicz was politically active and taken by the propaganda she would hear about and read. However, when the Soviets arrived, she saw felt that there was no difference between Hitler and Stalin
\(^{120}\) VHA Interview with Edward Spicer, Tape 1: 14:15-14:45
\(^{121}\) VHA Interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, Tape 2: 12:00-12:45
Despite more Jews having the opportunity to attend schools, the education shifted in order to represent the new regime’s viewpoints. Leon Berk talked about the atmospheric change and new curriculum. “We learned not to ask questions, to hold our tongue, to be careful and to listen to all of the propaganda which was full of lies, and to accept it if you wanted to stay alive.” Though he was in school for medicine, he was required to learn the history of the communist party to pass an exam. When he could not recall specific teachings of Lenin, he was forced to take all of his exams over again.\textsuperscript{122}

Anita White attended university in Lviv when Soviets took over; while she was still able to continue her schooling, she noticed that Russian was added as a required language to her curriculum. Since her mother was Russian, she was able to practice the language at home as well as school.\textsuperscript{123} Wolf Lichter felt political and religious oppression and noticed a shift in school atmosphere as well. He remembers the teachers that were in place before the war seemed to be disappearing, and new ones came in with the Soviet occupation. “Day in and day out they would tell us there is no God but Stalin, you’re allegiance is not to the family but to Stalin.”\textsuperscript{124} Kurt Lewin, who attended school with Poles and Ukrainians, felt an atmosphere of paranoia when he attended class. The school became Sovietized and co-educational, when previously it was single-sex. Being known as an outspoken revolutionist, he feared that he could be arrested while in school for being perceived as disruptive or a threat.\textsuperscript{125}

While there was still an opportunity for these adolescents and young adults to attend school, Soviet occupation brought with it a more generally oppressive lifestyle for the Jewish

\textsuperscript{122} VHA Interview with Leon Berk, Tape 1: 25:00-29:30
\textsuperscript{123} VHA Interview with Anita White, Tape 1: 18:30-20:00. She was at university when the Germans re-entered the city in 1941; her classes were then suspended
\textsuperscript{124} VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter, Tape 2: 4:00-5:40
\textsuperscript{125} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 2: 14:00-16:00
population. Many Jewish families owned shops or private businesses, and these would be shut down or taken over by the Soviets, leaving them with no viable source of income. The military supply store which had been owned by William Weiss’ father was confiscated and taken away. Anita White recalls how the Soviets would close down Jewish shops and stores, and take items that they wanted for themselves. As a result, there were fewer chances for Jews to make a livelihood. There were shortages of certain items, and no structured form of distributing goods. Instead, items would be sold in different parts of the city at varying times, and there would be a rush to try and buy as much as possible. By late September, there was a disintegration of food and fuel.

At the same time, the population of the city was swelling with the arrival of refugees fleeing from Western Poland and German occupation. Arrests and deportations began, with Jews (and Poles and Ukrainians) being taken from Lviv and put into prisons or deported out of the country. Pepa Rosenman claims that the Soviets started “cleansing the city of political people, prominent people, officials and activists”; her brother in law, who was a well-known Zionist figure, was taken away and never seen again. White’s roommate was taken from the dorms by Soviets because they were searching for her brother. She was taken to Siberia and returned after the war to find her entire family had been killed. Luisa Hornstein also remembers people who were politically influential, rich or refugees from Western Poland were taken away to Siberia, including some classmates.

126 VHA Interview with William Weiss, Tape 2: 4:35-5:30
127 VHA Interview with Anita White, Tape 2: 6:15-7:20
128 VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 2: 2:00-4:00
129 VHA Interview with Pepa Rosenman, Tape 2: 16:00-17:00
130 VHA Interview with Anita White, Tape 2: 7:30-9:00
131 VHA Interview with Luisa Hornstein, Tape 2: 6:20-10:00
Despite the hardships faced during the Soviet occupation, there was still some semblance of a normal life for the Jews. Some, such as refugee Joe Hershkowitz, felt safer on the Russian side than he had in German-controlled Tarnow.\textsuperscript{132} However, the arrival of the Germans in the summer of 1941 would bring an immediate and drastic change in living conditions and relations with Poles and Ukrainians. There was a sense that Germany was a threat in the years leading up to the breakout of war and during Soviet occupation. William Weiss did not remember knowing anything about the possibility of Soviet rule or specific policies. However, he said they always knew that the Germans started the war and would eventually get to them, which scared everyone.\textsuperscript{133} Bina Blumenfield would hear her parents talking about the country during the 1930s and the rumors of terrible conditions coming from the west. Some Jews had hidden radios, where they could occasionally catch a station and listen to the news. The reports they heard led people to believe that horrible things were going to happen to them if the Germans came to the region.\textsuperscript{134} Samuel Drix felt that, as the influence from Germany became greater, it led to growing anti-Semitism during the 1930s.\textsuperscript{135}

Leon Berk was coming home from his exams at the end of June when he witnessed the arrival of the Germans. There was immediate chaos and disorder, with nobody entirely sure what was happening; he decided it would be best to go home and wait it out. He witnessed an event on his way which he described in great detail:

I saw German motorcycles coming in from the street, behind them the lorries with German soldiers, and suddenly I saw Ukrainian girls in their national attire with buckets

\textsuperscript{132} VHA Interview with Joe Hershkowitz, Tape 3: 11:00
\textsuperscript{133} VHA Interview with William Weiss, Tape 2: 1:30-2:00
\textsuperscript{134} VHA Interview with Bina Blumenfield, Tape 1: 17:00-19:30
\textsuperscript{135} VHA Interview with Samuel Drix, Tape 1: 13:00-14:05
of flowers approaching the Germans, jumping on them and kissing them and embracing them.\textsuperscript{136}

Berk also witnessed Ukrainians shooting at the retreating Soviet troops. He was surprised at this sight, as the Ukrainians seemed to have gotten along well with the Soviets. Bina Blumenfield recalls a similar sight:

Ukrainian people had put on their national costumes and they were rejoicing in the streets together with the Germans. And the Jewish people of course were sitting quietly in hiding, most of them wherever there was a spot to be hidden. But it did not take very long for the Ukrainian people to find the Jewish families.\textsuperscript{137}

Anti-Semitic sentiments came out in force during this transition from Soviet to German rule. Two distinct pogroms, one at the end of June into July and another from July 25 to 27, were apparently led by Ukrainian locals with the support of German occupiers. Wolf Lichter recalls the harsh punishments brought to all different kinds of Jewish citizens during the early transition days:

These hoodlums did not spare any kind of punishment, from tearing their hair to beating them, seeing the blood flowing and stamping on them. It applied to man, woman and child… The majority of the Germans who came in would join in or just pass by. These screams, these cries of those people, now being 50 years later, are still in my ears.\textsuperscript{138}

People were beaten mercilessly in the streets, with nobody stopping to help or trying to interfere. For two weeks, “hoodlums” would go door to door in Jewish neighborhoods and take families

\textsuperscript{136} VHA Interview with Leon Berk, Tape 2: 1:00-4:00  
\textsuperscript{137} VHA Interview with Bina Blumenfield, Tape1:19:30-20:30  
\textsuperscript{138} VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter, Tape 2: 12:00-14:45
out of their homes. Lichter’s mother decided to take him to a relative in a non-Jewish location within the city for protection. As he walked through the streets of his neighborhood, he witnessed a woman running from a crowd of people who chased her and screamed “kill the Jew”; she was stamped and beaten to death before his eyes.\(^{139}\)

Blumenfield said that men were dragged out of their homes and forced to pick up papers and trash with their mouths, lying belly down on the street.\(^{140}\) Pepa Rosenman, who at this point had left the city for a neighboring suburb, hired a Pole to go into Lviv after two days of pogroms to get her parents out. Her mother told her that Germans allowed Ukrainians to go into Jewish quarters to round up Jews, and that the violence was so severe, “Jewish blood was running in the gutters”; not being there to personally witness it, she found it shocking and hard to believe.\(^{141}\)

Part of the heightened Ukrainian anti-Semitism seemed to be due to the thousands of prisoners who had been killed by the Soviet NKVD. When fleeing the city as the Germans closed in, they murdered the captives instead of letting them go. Some of these prisoners had been high ranking Ukrainian intellectuals, and since they could not fight the Soviets, Ukrainians took their revenge out on the Jews. Brygidki was one of several Lviv prisons that these murders took place in. Ukrainians and Germans took Jews to the sites, beat them and forced them to clean the jails.\(^{142}\) Lucyna Berkowicz’ brother-in-law lived behind Brygidki, and at night they could hear the Germans shooting and killing prisoners.\(^{143}\)

Kurt Lewin witnessed the German invasion and helped to tend to many wounded citizens, as he was in a first aid unit. He remembers the city being decorated in blue and yellow flags.

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\(^{139}\) VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter, Tape 2: 16:00-21:00
\(^{140}\) VHA Interview with Bina Blumenfield, Tape 1: 19:30-21:30
\(^{141}\) VHA Interview with Pepa Rosenman, Tape 2
\(^{142}\) VHA Interview with Anita White, Tape 3. White also described the Ukrainian anti-Semitism as ‘legendary’
\(^{143}\) VHA Interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, Tape 3: 4:00-5:00
because some Ukrainians were under the illusion that an independent Ukraine would be created with German assistance. After hearing rumors of Ukrainians attacking Jews, four or five of them came into his house, dragged him into the street, beat him and took him to Brygidki:

They were chasing us out and beating us with rifles, feet, fists and sticks, and chasing us into the center streets. On the sidewalks you had Poles and Ukrainians clapping hands and enjoying this spectacle. The whole group was run into the prison. We were chased into a corner and put to work to drag out bodies of prisoners who were executed by the NKVD.\textsuperscript{144}

Lewin estimates there were a few thousand bodies in the cellar, which had been sealed and set on fire by the Soviets before their departure. He believes that the prisoners were officers, owners of large shops, politicians and others who were in the public eye. These included members of the Jewish community, such as bankers, newspapermen, Zionists and politicians.\textsuperscript{145} Anti-Semitic remarks were made to the Jews as they arrived and began to work in the prison: “We were brought there as Jews, and Ukrainian nationalists were screaming and howling that we were the murderers, communists, we killed Christ, the usual. We were given ropes and some people had to go down and bring the bodies out.”\textsuperscript{146} During his work at Brygidki, Lewin saw his father marched in with other Jews and put in a corner of the outside yard, where he was executed by machine guns. After spending the whole day at the prison, he walked back home, where he was met with disbelief by his neighbors.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{144} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 3: 18:35-23:00
\textsuperscript{145} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 3: 24:00-24:30. Lewin believes his father would have been taken into the prison as well, since he was an influential rabbi, but was too influential
\textsuperscript{146} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 3: 24:30-25:00
\textsuperscript{147} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin, Tape 3: 25:00-29:15
Leon Berk was also forced to help clean out a prison. Though he was warned not to leave the house, Berk went out looking for a cousin to see if he had any spare food. He was jumped by two Ukrainians and pushed into a city square where hundreds of Jews were already assimilated. They were forced to get in line and march to Lackiego Street Prison, where they were beaten and screamed at for hours.

On the fence were Ukrainians sitting like vultures, screaming “death to the Jews, death to the capitalists, death to the Communists, you wanted Stalin but you won’t have him now.” And stones and sticks were thrown at us, and we were sitting there on the earth and waiting for the attacks of the Ukrainians.\footnote{VHA Interview with Leon Berk, Tape 2: 4:20-11:15}

Berk was led into a cellar full of decomposing bodies who had been killed by the NKVD. Many were Ukrainian nationalists, and he was forced to take out the bodies and bring them to the yard. At the end of the day, the Germans took his papers and let him out, telling him to come back tomorrow and do the same work of else they would come and find him.\footnote{VHA Interview with Leon Berk, Tape 2: 13:00-15:00}

Based on survivor descriptions, these two pogroms were initiated and carried out by mobs of Ukrainians, with less German involvement. Interactions with Ukrainians during German occupation were almost universally negative in the survivor’s recollections. Fela Machauf called the Ukrainians “human garbage” who willingly helped to persecute Jews with the aid and support of Germans. In 1941, when on a train from Lviv to Krakow, a Ukrainian worker beat her over the head with a club as she waited at the station.\footnote{VHA Interview with Fela Machauf} Wanda Mehr personally felt that Ukrainians were greater anti-Semites than Poles. She remembers her Ukrainian neighbors helping the Germans round up Jews, since they were from the area and knew exactly where they
lived. A local Polish priest offered to hide her mother, father and youngest brother in his church basement. But when a young boy saw the wife taking food in the basement, he went to the Gestapo and told them he suspected they were hiding Jews. Her family was caught, and they were all killed by Germans.\textsuperscript{151} Another relative, her uncle, would smuggle money into Lviv on occasion. A Ukrainian man and his children saw her uncle on the bridge, grabbed his bag of money and threw him into the river; not knowing how to swim, he drowned.\textsuperscript{152}

Bill Koenig, who during the interwar period had grown up with Ukrainian friends and bad relations with Poles, saw a change in Ukrainian attitudes towards the Jews. At the onset of German occupation, “they were already killing Jews on the streets, especially the ones that were noticeable: the ones with the beards, the really Hasidic Jews. And there were a lot of them by us.”\textsuperscript{153} Edward Spicer also remembers Ukrainians beating up and killing Jews on the streets within a few days of German arrival. He was taken by Ukrainians to a railroad station, where he was beaten up and thrown down a staircase. They were held overnight, and during the night some men who made noise were killed or beaten with rifles.\textsuperscript{154} Lucyna Berkowicz remembers Ukrainians embracing German rule, taking people out of the city and killing them. She had to save her husband’s life from Ukrainian police after he went out after curfew and without his armband to retrieve her clothes from her mother’s house. After being alerted by a Polish friend, she went to the station and begged for his release; she believes that if she had come a few hours later, he would’ve been taken to a prison or killed.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{151} VHA Interview with Wanda Mehr, Tape 1: 24:00-26:00
\textsuperscript{152} VHA Interview with Wanda Mehr, Tape 4: 22:00-26:00
\textsuperscript{153} VHA Interview with Bill Koenig, Tape 2: 6:30-8:00
\textsuperscript{154} VHA Interview with Edward Spicer, Tape 2: 17:00-18:45
\textsuperscript{155} VHA Interview with Lucyna Berkowicz, Tape 3: 0:00-4:00
Throughout the occupation, restrictions were gradually placed on the Jewish population. In the midst of the summer pogroms, the armband was instituted; Jews were required to wear Star of David bands to distinguish themselves from gentile residents.\textsuperscript{156} Official posters were put up listing the items that Jews were no longer allowed to possess, such as furs and radios. Disobedience of these rules could be punishable by death.\textsuperscript{157} Jews were not allowed to use parks, and certain districts began to close off. In the fall of 1941, the Lviv ghetto was established. Initially it was ‘open’, with Jews able to go in and out. But eventually a wall was erected that sealed off the ghetto from other neighborhoods, though some were able to get around this by traveling in the city’s large sewer system.\textsuperscript{158}

Survivor recollections of Poles during the German occupation were not as universally negative as the way they remembered Ukrainians. While they were seen cheering on the Jewish persecution by some witnesses, aid and indifference are more common themes expressed. Samuel Drix believed that the Jews had two common enemies during the war: Germans and Ukrainians. He felt that Poles remained relatively neutral throughout the conflict.\textsuperscript{159} Lviv survivors talk about their experiences being helped by individual Poles who risked their own lives to give aid. Wolf Lichter’s sister was saved by a Polish family that was previously employed by his father; remembering the good relations they had with him, they volunteered to hide her.\textsuperscript{160} Bill Koenig, who grew up with Ukrainian friends and often got into physical fights with Poles, found himself receiving aid from a Polish farmer when he got sick with typhus.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{156} VHA Interview with Anita White, Tape 2
\textsuperscript{157} VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter: Tape 2: 27:00-29:00
\textsuperscript{158} VHA Interview with Kurt Lewin: Tape 3: 3:00-5:00
\textsuperscript{159} VHA Interview with Samuel Drix
\textsuperscript{160} VHA Interview with Wolf Lichter: Tape 2: 9:30-11:00
\textsuperscript{161} VHA Interview with Bill Koenig
After escaping from the Lviv ghetto, Wanda Mehr hid in a Polish house for the remainder of the war.

Leon Berk witnessed many Poles behaving in a neutral manner, but he personally was helped by a Polish family who he had not even known prior to the war. They risked their own lives to help him and his partner hide from German actions. Kristine Keren, born in 1935, was only a young girl for the majority of the war and never had the opportunity to attend school until after liberation. After her family was moved to the ghetto, a Pole named Leopold Soha helped to smuggle her out through the large sewer system and hid her with a Catholic family.

Under both Soviet and German occupation, Jews experienced drastic changes which affected their day-to-day lives. Soviet rule brought with it shifts in education, loss of businesses, food shortages and deportation to Siberia. German takeover led to immediate bloodshed and would bring the end of Jewish freedom and isolation in the ghetto. While the interwar years up to 1939 saw Jews dealing with negative and sometimes anti-Semitic relations from both Poles and Ukrainians, the majority of occupation era sentiments focus on Ukrainian anti-Semitism during German occupation, with less frequent mention of Polish aid, collaboration and indifference.

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162 VHA Interview with Leon Berk, Tape 2: 21:00-23:00
163 VHA Interview with Kristine Keren, Tape 3: 1:00-14:00
Conclusion

The Shoah Foundation was able to successfully interview thousands of Jewish survivors because of the context in which it arose. Decades of transition helped to shape the idea of the Holocaust survivor and allow for the creation of a database which preserved Jewish memories of World War II. When using the archive to focus on Lviv, the interviews from Jewish survivors can show certain themes about their experiences with neighbors and occupiers. Day to day interactions with these two groups played an important part in their experiences and were reflected in the interviews. The interwar period saw anti-Semitic verbal and physical attacks being directed towards men and women in forums such as the streets, neighborhoods and mixed schools. There was also a perception of ‘otherness’ and sense of being as an outsider in the city, despite the large population and prevalent Jewish culture.

During Soviet and German occupation, interviewees talked about their interactions with each and how their lives changed as a result of the war. There was a general sentiment that Soviet occupation was preferred over German rule; Jews were able to attend school and had less restrictions then what they would eventually face with the Germans. Within a few months of Nazi troops entering the city, the Lviv ghetto and Janowska camp were established and Jews were sequestered from the rest of the population. Survivor sentiments towards Ukrainians during this time period were decidedly negative; many talked of Ukrainians as collaborators with the Germans who welcomed them into the city. Those who witnessed or were affected by the summer 1941 pogroms talk of the heavy involvement that Ukrainian citizens had in beating and killing the Jews as they were forced to take responsibility for the NKVD prison massacres. Poles were not spoken of as harshly as the Ukrainians; some survivors detail the aid provided to them
by individual Poles, while others speak of their general indifference to the fate of the Jewish population.

Relations between these three cultures are complicated and go back centuries to when they first established themselves in the region. Poles and Ukrainians were not necessarily aligned in their hatred of Jews; they also had complicated and fraught interactions with each other. The historic land where Lviv is located was considered culturally important for both of them, and attempted claims to it sparked the 1918 Polish and Ukrainian War. Poland would emerge victorious, but they both faced their own hardships in the interwar period and while under occupation. Thousands of Poles and Ukrainians were persecuted and killed by the Soviet NKVD during their two years in Lviv. Many were also deported and “resettled” in Siberia. The fact that they perceived Jews as sympathizing and supporting the Communist regime could have been an important factor in their attitudes towards the Jews. During German occupation, Poles could by law be killed if they were found giving any sort of aid to the Jews. Ukrainians likely supported the German occupation because they saw it as their opportunity to finally take control of the city and form a Ukrainian state (a sentiment which would later be proven false, as Germans killed or arrested those behind the movement when they realized what the Ukrainians sought).

Historian Christoph Mick explores the concept that Jews, Poles and Ukrainians went through incompatible experiences during Soviet and German occupation, as the memories of these three groups can often contradict each other. Polish and Ukrainian memory seems to focus on their fight against Soviet oppressors and their own victimhood. Eyewitnesses also claim that there was Jewish collaboration with the Soviets and NKVD. Poles and Ukrainians also expressed a mutual hatred for each other and had different opinions about which of them started the ethnic cleansing that took place in the region during and after the war. Poles felt that Ukrainian were
responsible for the mass deportation of Polish intelligentsia during Soviet occupation and rejected the authority of the Ukrainian police force. Ukrainians primary sources, for their part, did not see their forces as hostile and rarely mention their collaboration with Soviet and German forces during the war. As Mick notes, there is no shared feeling of common suffering, and all groups perceived themselves as the principal victim at the conclusion of the war. Indeed, they were all vulnerable in some way during the war. Poles had undergone Ukrainian attacks as well as attacks from Soviets and Germans. Ukrainians felt they were victimized by the Soviets, Germans and especially Poles, as Ukrainians dealt with the ethnic cleansing of their citizens in Poland. Jews of course were victim to not only the German’s systemized program of murder, but to the actions of their Polish and Ukrainian neighbors as well.

Somewhat of a divide in discourse about the Holocaust, especially in Eastern Europe, remains to this day. Jewish memories of events are based on personal experiences and may conflict with what Polish and Ukrainian sources choose to focus on. VHA interviewees, coming from a particular point of view, do not get into the nuanced and complicated relationships that Poles and Ukrainians felt towards each other, or the potential reasons behind anti-Semitic dialogue. We also cannot be sure if some of their recollections were influenced by information they learned about after liberation and the end of the Nazi regime.

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164 Christoph Mick. Incompatible Experiences: Poles, Ukrainians and Jews in Lviv under Soviet and German Occupation, 1939-1944 (Journal of Contemporary History 2011 46:336) pages 338-350. Mick focuses on the time period of occupation, but all three groups have been present in the region since around the 14th century. Poland controlled the land until Austria-Hungary took over in 1772, before reclaiming in 1918. While under Austrian rule, Jews were criticized for attempting to align themselves with the rulers, who had attempted to eliminate religious persecution (see Yaroslav Hrystak’s Lviv: A Multicultural History Harvard University Studies, 2000)
165 Ibid, 262
166 For example, it is not known how much information was known about Germany during the war, and what was potentially learned afterwards after years of hearing about it through various outlets
However, with these Holocaust memories, we see that interactions between these three groups had been divisive prior to occupation and remained complex during the war. The frequency with which these relations are addressed shows that Polish and Ukrainian actions had a lasting effect on what survivors remember from their experiences when talking about them decades later. We also learn about the general structure of the city and in what types of forums they would come into contact with one another. Firsthand perspectives on Soviet and German occupation, an experience that only a portion of the Jewish population went through, are also detailed. Testimonies help to show the complexity of occupation and changes in lifestyle that Eastern European Jews underwent before the establishment of ghettos and concentration camps. The testimonies preserved in the archive help to construct an image of Lviv through the eyes of Jewish sources. Without them, we would have less knowledge of Jewish Holocaust experiences and perceptions of Poles, Ukrainians, Soviets and Germans. In an era where fewer and fewer witnesses remain, their stories will live on and continue to be researched after they are gone.
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